3. (Amended) Process for manufacturing a fastening part in accordance with Claim 1 comprising the following step:

applying a fluorine gas in a nitrogen atmosphere.

4. (Amended) Process in accordance with Claim 3, wherein the applying step is a continuous operation with 3 percent fluorine at room temperature and at a reduced pressure.

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5. (Amended) Device for the execution of the process in accordance with Claim 3, comprising:

a low pressure chamber,

wherein the fastening part is subjected to a fluorine-nitrogen gas atmosphere in the low pressure chamber.

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6. (Amended) Device in accordance with Claim 5, further comprising:

a connection for an evacuation pump,

an entry, and

an outlet for the fastening part.

7. (Amended) Process for manufacturing a fastening part in accordance with Claim 2 comprising the following step:

applying a fluorine gas in a nitrogen atmosphere.

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8. (Amended) Process in accordance with claim 7, wherein the applying step is a continuous operation with 3 percent fluorine at room temperature and at a reduced pressure.

9. (Amended) Device for the execution of the process in accordance with Claim 4, comprising:

a low pressure chamber,

wherein the fastening part is subjected to a fluorine-nitrogen gas atmosphere in the low pressure chamber.

10. (Amended) Device in accordance with Claim 9, further comprising:

a connection for an evacuation pump,

an entry, and

an outlet for the fastening part.

Please add new claims 11-16 to the application.

11. (New) Process in accordance with Claim 3, wherein the applying step is a discontinuous operation with 10 percent fluorine at 40 to 50°C and at a reduced pressure.

12. (New) Process in accordance with claim 4, wherein the reduced pressure is 650 mbar.

13. (New) Process in accordance with claim 11, wherein the reduced pressure is 650 mbar.

14. (New) Process in accordance with Claim 7, wherein the applying step is a discontinuous operation with 10 percent fluorine at 40 to 50°C and at a reduced pressure.

15. (New) Process in accordance with claim 8, wherein the reduced pressure is 650 mbar.

16. (New) Process in accordance with claim 14, wherein the reduced pressure is 650 mbar.

Applicants have enclosed a marked up version showing the changes relative to the clean version of the amended claims shown above. No claim fees are believed to be due as a result of this amendment.

REMARKS

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1-16 will be pending in the application. The claims have generally been amended to conform with standard United States practice and to clarify the nature of the invention. The general amendments were not done in response to patentability issues. Applicants provide the following comments to the Office Action of October 28, 2002.

Restriction

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 1-4, 7, and 8 (the claims directed towards the product and the process) will be examined.

Applicants note that the Examiner has gone final in regards of the restriction of claims 5, 6, 9 and 10. The Examiner has stated that these claims are anticipated based on newly cited reference US 5,882,728. Applicants dispute this reasoning because the cited prior art fails to disclose that the fluorination chamber will be used in the process that makes a fastening part